



**Testimony  
Bart Russell  
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Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)  
Before the Public Safety Committee  
March 4, 2010**

**RE: SB-312 AN ACT MANDATING REGIONALIZED PUBLIC SAFETY  
ANSWERING POINTS.**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) opposes SB-312, which effectively mandates regionalized public safety answering points by eliminating funding for municipal public safety answering points in 2013.

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are the facilities operated on a twenty-four hour basis to receive 9-1-1 calls and dispatch emergency response services or transferring or relaying 9-1-1 calls to other public safety agencies. The PSAP is the first point of reception of a 9-1-1 call.

Under current law, Connecticut's municipalities are responsible for ensuring that their residents have 9-1-1 service. Most municipalities in Connecticut operate their own PSAP, which are housed in police departments, fire departments or emergency communications centers. Larger municipalities receive an annual subsidy to offset the cost of PSAP operations. In addition, the current law authorizes subsidies for Regional Emergency Communications Centers (RECCs), which may be formed by 3 or more towns to provide 9-1-1 services.

The current system, which allows towns to determine how to best manage their public safety calls and provides them with some incentives to regionalize services, strikes an appropriate balance. SB-312, however, eliminates this balance by mandating regionalism and eliminating the ability of towns to determine which public safety answering point system would work best for their communities. Some towns may want to participate in regional programs but should not be forced to regionalize if they believe that it will undermine public safety or increase costs for their community.

In a recent presentation before the M.O.R.E. Commission, Economist Steve Lanza concluded that regionalizing municipal services is no silver bullet for achieving cost savings. We therefore urge rejection of SB-312 and, instead, recommend that the committee do a thorough cost-benefit analysis of this proposal, as called for in last year's bill, which did not pass.